

Wed. March 20th 1969

Call to Wor-ship: Pg. 23

Opening Hymn 287

Scripture Matt. 26; 14-16, 20-25, 47-50

27; 3-10

Gloria Patri

Prayer

Anthem Mr. Weaver

Announcement: ?

Church Sunday 9:30

Hymn 223

Sermon

Prayer & Lord's Prayer

Hymn 141

Benediction

Postlude

Judas The Traitor

Text:

During lent we generally hear and read mostly about Jesus. This is only natural since the season of lent is supposed to make us aware of the suffering and death which He endured. But there is one character who played a very important role in the events leading up to Christ's death. The man is Judas. We touched upon him briefly not too long ago, but we didn't look at him too closely. When we read the story of Judas as it is written in the Gospel it is broken up and does not leave too much of an impression on us. But if we take and put it all together and read it, the story becomes more like a story.

The first thing that we read about Judas concerning his betrayal of Jesus is the episode of his bargaining with the chief priests. The Gospel of John points out one thing that is not included in the other Gospels. If you recall at one point during the final days of Jesus, He was in a house in Bethany and a woman anointed His head with an expensive perfume; John tells the story that Judas questioned why this perfume wasn't sold and the money given to the poor. Then he adds that Judas did this not because he was concerned for the poor, but because he was a thief. Judas was the treasurer of the disciples and John adds that he had been taking money from the treasury. This argument has never been proved or disproved one way or the other. The one reason that it is not accepted too much, is the fact that many things in John's Gospel are thought to be merely his interpretation given in his style to point up what he is trying to make others believe. But nevertheless the chief priests were very eager to accept the chance to have Jesus turned over to them. They had been looking for a way to seize Jesus without arousing the anger of his disciples or His followers and this was just what they wanted. They agreed on a price of thirty pieces of silver was the price the Law had fixed as the price for a slave's life. It was thirty shekels and not thirty Denari as is so often said. The price that Judas received was approximately \$19.20 since the value of a shekel was

approximately 64¢.

There are three train- of thought as to why Judas betrayed Jesus. The first is greed. But this is thought to be rather unlikely by most scholars due to the fact that the gain was so little. If it is true that Judas did this strictly for money, then this is the most terrible example of what a man will do for money. The second reason is hatred. Judas may have betrayed Jesus because he thought that Jesus was going to be the leader of the rebellion against the Romans and when instead He remained quiet and loving toward all people, then Judas became disillusioned and began to hate Jesus and for this betrayed Him. Then the third reason is that Judas wanted to force the hand of Jesus to reveal Himself as the real Messiah. The consensus of opinion is that Judas never really intended for Jesus to die, and He thought instead of letting Himself be arrested Jesus would fight back. Most Biblical scholars believe that this is the most logical answer to why Judas betrayed Jesus.

In the next scene of the story we find the disciples and Jesus eating. When Jesus makes the declaration that one of them would betray Him, they are dumbfounded and want to know who it is. This proves that the deal that Judas made had been done in secrecy. For had it been done with the knowledge of the other eleven, the chances of his being killed by them would have been very good.

Then we come to the kiss of betrayal. This is the strange part of the whole story. Why was there a need to kiss Jesus to identify Him? These people knew Him. They had seen Him in the temple only the Sunday before, when He drove the money changers out. But here again the thought is that Judas believed that Jesus would react with violence when they tried to seize Him and Judas was merely trying to speed the process up. However his scheme backfired and Judas was a very disillusioned man.

The final act of the story is the suicide of Judas. We are told that Judas repented and brought back the money to return it. Now here is where Matthew adds one of his little touches to the event. All through the Gospel of Matthew you can find where he makes reference to a prophecy of the Old Testament

trying to prove that Jesus was the Messiah. In the first place most of these quotations were taken out of context and did not apply to Jesus at all. And in the second place he is very often mistaken where the quotation comes from. But we must recall that Matthew was writing to Jews to try to accept Jesus as the Messiah and he felt in order to do this he had to convince them beyond a doubt. So he added these prophecies. The prophecy quoted by Matthew, which he attributed to Jeremiah was in fact spoken by Zechariah. But in this final portion of the betrayal story we see that Judas was a troubled man because of what he had done and as a result he committed suicide.

Many people who read this story are very quick to say that had they been Judas they would have never betrayed Jesus. But the thing they are so prone to forget, is the fact that when things do not go exactly our way, or the way we think they should go, then we try to make them go the way would like them to go. It is so easy to stand on the sidelines and say boy that wouldn't be me. But ^{one thing is certain} ~~for example~~ we are not living 2000 years ago, and it is so ^{that} easy to betray Jesus in today's world we don't have to go back 2000 years.

Think of the times we have each betrayed Him. We betray Him every time we refuse or neglect to do what we should do as a Christian. We betray Him every time we show hatred instead of love to another person. And we betray Him whenever we forget the sacrifice He made for us and we take it for granted.

There is one other lesson that this story of Judas proves. And this is the fact that once we have done certain things, we cannot undo them. Judas was unable to undo the wrong that he did to Jesus and because of this he ended his life. All of us can look back in our lives and find something that we have done, some sin or some wrong that we have done to someone, and we can say as probably Judas did, "If I could only do that over again." If I only had that time to live over again. But the sad thing of life is that we only have most opportunities once. The occasion to do the right thing only comes once. We can't turn the hands of the clock back, no matter how much we would like to. Omar Khayyam the Persian poet wrote in the Rubaiyat the following poem.

The moving finger writes: and having writ, moves on; nor all your piety nor wit shall lure it back to cancel half a line, nor all your tears wash out a word of it.

The very fact that we cannot undo what we have done many times, should make us that much more careful that what we do and say are the proper thing to do and say. None of us should ever condemn Judas for what he did. Because the simple truth is that we are all Judas' and we remain that way unless we are able to come to Christ and let Him lead our lives. If we recall the passion story of Jesus we find that at the time of His trial all of the disciples had deserted Him. Did this make them any better than Judas? Of course it didn't, but they probably all hated Judas for what he had done, and they probably all felt that they would never have done it either. But what they did amounted to the same thing. So you see human nature is the same today as it was back in the days of Jesus. You and I are exactly the same as Judas and the disciples. We have the same feelings, the same desires, and the same motivations. And if we are given the same set of circumstances we would most likely do exactly as they. So it does no good whatever for us to stand back and to say that we would not have done that. What each of us need to do is to come to Christ and lean on Him for our strength. There is a hymn that goes, "I heard the voice of Jesus say Come unto Me and rest; Lay down thou weary one lay down thy head upon my breast. I came to Jesus and I was, weary and worn and sad; I found in Him a resting place and He has made me glad. I heard the voice of Jesus say, "Behold I freely give, the living water thirsty one, stoop down and drink and live." I came to Jesus and I drank of that life giving stream; my thirst was quenched, my soul revived and now I live in Him. Let us pray.